

STRIDE Interreg Danube Project, Press Release (29th of July 2020)

On the 18th of May 2020, the Monitoring Committee of the Interreg Danube Transnational Programme approved (under conditions) 35 new projects within the programme's third call for proposals. The third call launched by the Danube Transnational Programme (DTP) started with an initial 276 Expressions of Interest submitted, among which 61 were invited to submit a full application form during the second step of the application process. Among the 35 approved third call Interreg DTP projects was the STRIDE project, which is aligned with the Priority Axis 3 – *Better connected and energy responsible Danube region*, and will directly contribute to the programme Specific objective 3.2 – *Improve energy security and energy efficiency*. The main results of the STRIDE project are developed and integrated Smart Grid strategies and action plans at a regional/local level with a joint collaboration of participating Danube regions.

In recent years, Smart Grids have established a position very high on the European Union's agenda. As the development of new technologies have allowed for more concrete and realistic system solutions in regards to smart grids, Smart Grids increasingly represent the entire future development of the electric power system. Smart Grid concepts cover all areas – from the planning, operation, maintenance of the grid on one side and on the other side from production, transmission, distribution and end-use. Although prepared from a technological standpoint to implement Smart Grids, the Danube region is still in the early stages of the actual deployment of smart distribution systems, as regions and local communities across the Danube area lack knowledge and capacities for the integration of Smart Grid concepts into regional and local policies. Local policy change to integrate the Smart Grid concept is essential in the further development of Smart Villages, Smart Cities or Smart Regions.

The STRIDE project, standing for *Improved energy planning through the Integration of Smart Grid concepts in the Danube Region*, is led by the Local Energy Agency Spodnje Podravje (LEASP) together with seven project partners and eight associated partners from Slovenia, Germany, Austria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Bulgaria and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Through knowledge transfer and the development of planning tools, the STRIDE project aims to provide a comprehensive support for regional/local policy makers for the improvement of energy planning. Some main objectives of the transnational project include regional analyses, developed strategies, action plans and other tools (i.e. methodologies, guidebook, web platform) that will enable and accelerate the integration of Smart Grid concepts into regional and local policies across the Danube region. Furthermore, the methodology for regional analysis, good practice guidebook and web platform will be designed in a way that allows for their application throughout the entire Danube region; therefore, the

outcomes of the project will represent a high replication value and ensure scalability within the Danube region and beyond.

Project Partners

The STRIDE partnership is led by the Local Energy Agency Spodnje Podravje (LEASP). The partnership is well balanced with competent partners (ERDF/IPA + ASPs), including energy agencies, a university, R&D organisations, energy clusters and policy makers. The partnership expands across various regions, ranging in various levels of economic development.

The STRIDE project addresses different and joint challenges of participating regions with a holistic approach, considering climate, financial, social aspects and technical potentials of regions. Transnational cooperation will bring added value by promoting the exchange and transfer of knowledge between regions and the development of Smart Grids considering new innovative approaches and the integration of innovative technologies. To this sense, the partnership composition is crucial and combines different roles in order to provide comprehensive solutions adapted to the needs and specific characteristics of participating regions.

1. Local Energy Agency Spodnje Podravje (Slovenia)



2. European Institute for Innovation-Technology (Germany)



3. ConPlusUltra (Austria)



4. Ekoport (Czech Republic)



5. Bay Zoltán Nonprofit Ltd. for Applied Research (Hungary)



6. University of Zagreb Faculty of Electrical Engineering and Computing (Croatia)



7. Bulgarian Energy and Mining Forum (Bulgaria)



8. Centre for Energy, Environment and Resources (Bosnia and Herzegovina)



Associated partners:

9. Czech Biogas Association (Czech Republic)
10. Scientific Research Centre Bistra Ptuj (Slovenia)
11. Sustainable Energy Development Agency (Bulgaria)
12. Public utility Dorfen Ltd (Germany)
13. Ministry of Environment, Protection and Energy (Croatia)
14. Regional Economic Community “REZ” d.o.o. Zenica (Bosnia and Herzegovina)
15. BEST - Bioenergy and Sustainable Technologies (Austria)
16. Hungarian Energy and Public Utility Regulatory Authority (Hungary)

Project Details

Total Budget: € 1,061,969.80

Programme Funding Quote (ERDF): 85%

Programme: Interreg Danube Transnational Programme